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ABSTRACT

Discussed are adults' egocentric attitudes about children, particularly toddlers, and ways in which such attitudes can creat unnecessary stress in the caregiver and toddler. Emphasis is given to: (1) hostile myths about toddlers that obscure reality and muddy relationships; (2) misunderstandings about ways in which toddlers think; (3) young children's need to develop embryonic feelings of competence or self-esteem; and (4) toddler behaviors that adults view as undesirable. The section on hostile myths about toddlers discusses power, discipline, and ways of coping with anxiety. The section on toddlers' thinking explores physical activity as the basis of mental development, perspective taking, concepts, pretending, fantasizing, and language. The section on toddlers' development of self-awareness deals with toddlers' limited objectivity, growing self-image, sensuality, gender development, will and competence, use of possessions to promote the sense of individuality, negativism, aggression, and need for clear-cut guidelines. The concluding section explores aspects of toddlers' play, social relations, sibling rivalry, toilet training, and parents' mental health. (RH)

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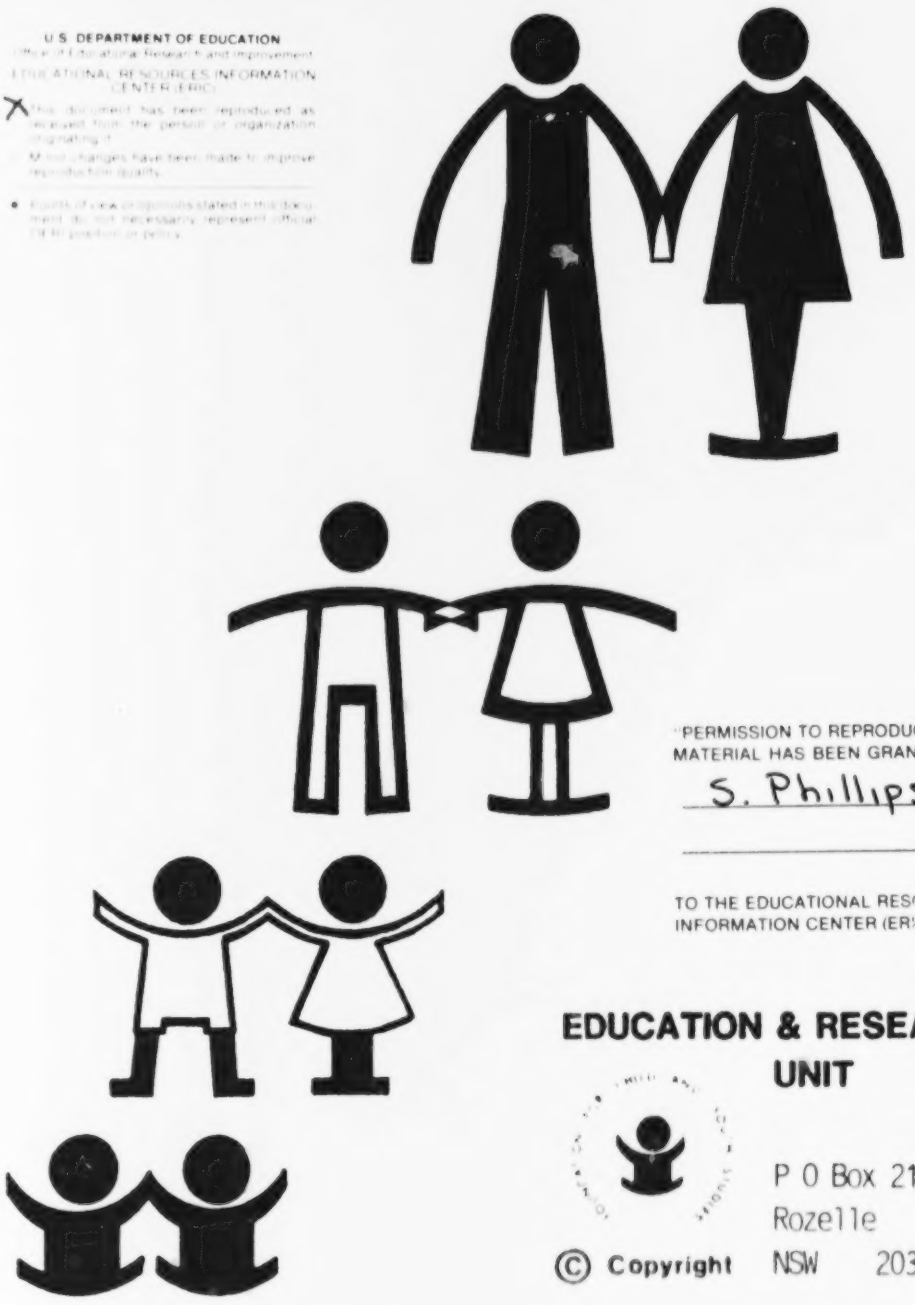

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TODDLERS

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TODDLERS

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Often relationships with children are muddied by cultural prescriptions and stereotypes. For example toddlers, along with old people and adolescents, share a very negative image, which can set an agenda which fosters an aimosphere conducive to disharmony and stressful relationships. There are a variety of ways in which this negative image is engendered: through folklore, attitudes handed down in families, and the injunctions of helpers or some health professionals and child rearing manuals. For example we all come across books entitled The Terrible Twos and the like. These are often based on models which project the motives of power and competition of adult men into toddlers. Yet a toddler is qualitatively different in his or her motives and perspective, because his or her concerns are not those of the market place but of becoming a person in an adult world.

Some professional writing about toddlers is of the joking kind. Its popularity lies in seeming acknowledgment of the exasperated feelings which most, who live with toddlers, experience. Ostensibly it uses negative associations to make light of toddlers' behaviour, but for many it reinforces anxiety because it perpetuates stereotypes about toddlers which are predominantly associated with conflict and struggles for power. Such joking represses rather than helps negative feelings. More helpful are genuine insights into toddlers' thinking and behaviour, so that one doesn't feel anxious about mismanaging and controlling.

In contrast the false projections and devices, such as are quoted here, could be described as adult chauvinism, for they are egocentric attitudes about children, and particularly toddlers, and lead to misinterpretations which can create unnnecessary stress in both caregiver and toddler. They are apparent in many areas and this paper concentrates on four of them:

1. Hostile myths about toddlers which obscure reality and muddy relationships

2. How toddlers think. Misunderstandings which create an unnecessarily stressful environment for toddlers and caregivers

3. The necessity for young children to develop embryonic feelings of competence or self esteem

4. Behaviours in toddlers which are seen as undesirable by adults, yet are not recognised as:
   (a) an outcome of living in a materialistic society
   (b) due to the toddler's unawareness of post-industrial ethics.

HOSTILE MYTHS ABOUT YOUNG CHILDREN

Ways of Coping With Anxiety

Most health professionals are familiar with hostile statements about children of the following kind: "Toddlers need some of the natural naughtiness taken out of them". Interestingly there are cultures which do not accept that children are naturally naughty, so why does ours? A frequent answer to that question is that the belief stems from the old protestant ethic notion of original sin in children. Children were seen as a product of, and marked by, adult sin and needing to have the sin chastised out of them. Although the concept has gone out of fashion, some of the habits associated with it have remained (Phillips, 1982).

Influenced by the work of Lloyd de Mause (1974) many believe such hostile concepts of children are culturally sanctioned myths, used by parents and caretakers as a means of relieving their anxiety about caring for children and their methods of coping with children. For example if a caregiver is excessively anxious about doing the right thing then the belief, that children need some of the natural naughtiness taken out of them, means they can justify a whole set of similar premises such as "spare the rod and spoil the child" and even quite harsh child rearing practices, as a way around control of their own feelings.

De Mause particularly describes adults in the historical past, whom he believes were sanctioned by social custom to project their own needs, anger and frustration into the children to such an extent that they unrealistically saw the child in a hostile fashion and as inherently wicked or power hungry, when in fact the child was terrified, distressed or bewildered as to how to behave. Similarly Bowlby and others record cases where parents reverse roles with their children and use him or her as a substitute parent and demand a level of emotional support which is well beyond the child's stage of maturity. De Mause in support of these observations describes a toddler who would not drink from her bottle until she had calmed her crying mother - a pattern based on continual demands for mothering from her two year old by this very disturbed mother. Such a situation can involve much ambivalence toward the child, since typically such a parent is a product of parents who were seen as providing insufficient love and the child is expected to be deficient in this respect also and can never be accepted as loving enough.

Anxiety about one's children can also be handled by empathising with their needs and acting constructively and, as de Mause and others see it, the greater the ability to empathise with others, including children, the more mature the personality. He sees it as the predominant mode in child raising in contemporary society.

So many parents and professionals disagreed with this premise that a study was initiated to record often repeated hostile myths and adult chauvinisms, which used children as extensions of adult feelings, in order to see how common they were in the general population. The study was based on a random sample of adults

ranging in age from 18 to 80 and from twenty Sydney suburbs, which were representative of a broad range of status and educational attributes. After the usual research precautions, these people were questioned about their attitudes to children and child raising. Included in the questions were many which involved hostile folklore about children. The adults were also observed with their children and their attitudes checked again much later to ensure that they were reliable (Phillips, 1982 a & b).

The study revealed a deal of support for rather hostile attitudes to children. For example more than 40 percent thought children needed some of the natural naughtiness taken out of them. There was also considerable lack of empathy and a tendency among 45 percent of the population to believe that if a child has upset feelings its best to leave him or her alone and not make it look serious. Yet research and professional experience confirms that where parents allow children to express their feeling they grow up much more resilient and stable (Phillips, 1986). Slightly less than a third retained some hostilities reminiscent of the nineteenth century. For example they argued that it was sometimes necesssary to break the child's will.

Power

While most who held this view were not as punishing as their nineteenth century counterparts, milder versions of the attitude were apparent. For example, some caregivers gave angry and punishing reactions to toddlers, around 16 months, when their children were beginning to develop some self assertion and had resisted putting on a jumper or having a bath. These parents, used to the more compliant early stages, felt threatened and anxious about loss of control and tried to return the toddler to the more passive state by "breaking his or her will". Actually when they came to understand that these were early signs of an independent little person, with a capacity for self initiation, they saw the cause for celebration, rather than punishment and stress was reduced for them.

There was also a tendency among the adults, who were interviewed and observed, to relieve their anxieties about loss of control over children by certain projective processes. For example more than half, who were very anxious, were apt to say, "If you are not careful young children think they are boss and try to run things". Certainly toddlers try to assert themselves, but in view of their small size and, as we shall see later, lack of planfulness, it is a curious belief that a toddler could overpower a mature grown-up. Moreover the idea is one that is very hard to encourage over-anxious adults to think about rationally. A more easily recognisable example of the projection of adult anxiety into a toddler is given by de Mause, when he describes a young mother who had been continually accused by her father of being over sexed and promiscuous. She projected her own "faults" onto her toddler and saw her friendly behaviour as dangerous indications that she was already a "sex pot".

Whilst many of these statements are about children in general,

little monster theories abounded and were most particularly applied to toddlers. Professionals supplied many case illustrations. One tertiary trained teacher, among others, was observed to have no understanding of the reasons for tantrum throwing and other typical toddler reactions to frustration when attempting to achieve some new skill or competence. Another described the autonomy seeking of his female toddler as an indication that she was going to grow into a "typical female shrew". In fact it was interesting how often typical toddler behaviour was described derogatorily as "temperament" in female toddlers. Many, particularly fathers thought their toddlers had as yet few human qualities and were dreadfully spoilt. In some cases there were animal like fantasies about toddlers.

In summary there was a tendency to frequently quote unsubstantiated hostile myths to justify practices which relieved adult anxiety but were, for the toddler, developmentally inaccurate and inappropriate. Empathy was low and knowledge of child development was somewhat abysmal. There were differences between groups but these were not major and it seems that education about child development in the community should be directed as much to the middle classes and the tertiary educated as to those who are "less priveleged" economically and educationally.

Discipline

One outcome of these culturally encouraged hostile myths is that we have a negative discipline in which "don't" predominates. In fact in toddlerhood and earlier this "don't" discipline is not developmentally suited to encouraging the most effective outcomes. This is because for the toddler the verbal injunction, or language, is tied to action. For example if a two year old is in the mood and asked to put a doll on the bed she will do so. If the child is told: "Don't put the doll on the bed", he or she will probabaly still do so, even if asked to say the words. It appears that language at this age can direct action but not non action. The child must be able to disassociate language and action before language can fully guide behaviour - probably not until 4 years of age (Phillips, 1986).

So discipline is more effective with young children if it involves "Do" and activity rather than "Don't" and non activity. For example, "Wipe your hands clean before you put them on the chair covers", rather than "Don't touch things with sticky hands". In addition, in teaching a toddler rules, it is more effective to get the child to practice the activity while saying the words. The toddler is governed by the motor rule and a parent is involved in conditioning and seeking extensive repetition at this stage because symbolic memory span is short (Saltz & Dixon, 1982).

Thus parents and professionals often find more successful interactions with toddlers when they become more conscious of the hostile myths and the manner in which they can become self-fulfilling prophecies. This process is most successful where the qualitatively different nature of a toddler's

development and thinking, from that of older children and adults, is recognised. This approach certainly reduced the stress in both parents and toddlers in all the cases described above.

Any exploration of the toddler's qualitative differences needs to begin with physical development, because in the toddler it is supremely important to mental development which will be discussed in the subsequent section.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Age-wise, toddlerhood is typically regarded as beginning around sixteen months and lasting until roughly two and a half years, when the preschool years begin. Toddlers are still babies, but walking, talking, self assertive babies, quite different from what they were as infants (Stone & Church, 1984). Physically the toddler, as distinct from the preschooler, is still short and chubby like the infant, and is a product of the rapid bodily growth and mastery of basic motor skills in the infant years. Even so, from the emergence of toddlerhood to the entry into the preshool years, the child's body and motor skills change even more dramatically.

Whereas the walking infant in a hurry may revert to crawling, for toddlers walking and trotting are the favoured means of locomotion, but their walking appears inflexible at the joints and they tread with the whole sole of each foot. To balance they shift their weight from side to side which characterises the toddle of the toddler, whereas preschoolers flex their knees and step from heel to toe. In toddlers there is as yet limited differentiation from the two sides of the body so that their arms and/or legs act as one when they are moving to music or in rhythm. In learning to ride a tricycle they may at first try to push with both feet at once and have some trouble mastering alternating pushing.

The posture of the toddler is also very different from that of the infant and the preschooler. Instead of the Bhudda-like pose of infancy or the heel to buttocks and folded forelegs of the preschooler, the toddler sits with legs forward (Stone & Church, 1984). Toddlers alone are so arranged as to be able to bend at the waist, place the crown of their heads to the floor and regard all and sundry upside down through their legs.

They have learnt to feed themselves with a spoon and are able to drink through a straw and eat an icecream in a cone, albeit rather messily. Toddlers can not only unscrew lids, as the infant did, but screw them back if they are a manageable size. They have learnt basic visual and grasping co-ordinations in infancy but still have trouble in letting go of objects. For example, they may carry and place a cup of milk successfully on the table, only to spill it during release.

They can work simple record players, switching on the power, choosing and placing the record they want to hear and adjust the volume. They generally keep it turned low, suggesting an

aversion to loud noise. They can remove their clothes but it is not until preschool years that they learn to put them on and fasten them. Some toddlers even enjoy taking on simple household tasks, such as wiping a table clean or setting the table in a rudimentary fashion.

Toddlers are ambivalent about their developing autonomy and physical growth. At one minute they want to reach out and test and do things for themselves and at the next minute feel vulnerable and want to be babied and cuddled and protected. Obviously if they can achieve something themselves it is good to encourage them to go ahead and try, thus fostering their drive for autonomy, although one must, where necessary, prevent foolhardiness.

Parents also feel ambivalent about encouraging autonomous physical development in their toddlers and often remark that they mourn the loss of the semi-dependent toddler stage. Sometimes they report an awareness of subtly sabotaging the toddler's progress (Stone & Church, 1984). For example one mother, with a delightful toddler, described how the only time she was allowed a long cuddle was when carrying her down stairs. "I find myself deliberately not encouraging her to go down stairs by herself". One such issue seems unimportant and not to amount to sabotage, but where the not letting go is so total that the toddler is chastised for venturing beyond the caretaker's side or trying new skills, then the toddler does not have sufficient opportunity for optimum development of physical independence and thus good mental health.

HOW TODDLERS THINK

Physical Activity is the Basis of Mental Development

Learning through physical activity appears to be very important if toddlers are to develop mentally (Saltz & Dixon, 1982). In fact the child's advances in understanding are very much related to the child's motor development in the early years (Phillips, 1986). For example, by two years advances in motor development permit children to crawl under, over and around objects. These activities considerably advance understanding of "inside". "outside" and "around". Similarly, while toddlers are enjoying putting things into and taking them out of containers, pouring water, moulding play-dough, stretching and bending things and transporting items on toy carts, wagons or trucks, they are also exploring, testing and probing and enhancing their concepts of physical events and objects and their properties.

Thus the development of thought in babies and toddlers is based on perceptual and motor exploration. Physical activities with toys, utensils and everyday objects provide a sensory record of shape and contour in the developing cortex or sub cortex. As the toddler approaches the second year, he or she becomes interested in play with building blocks, which aids understanding of organisational aspects of objects. For example putting blocks together and apart provides the necessary motoric basis for later

understanding of adding or subtraction (Phillips, 1986).

In fact children have to learn many basic concepts which are sometimes mistakenly taken for granted as innate - another of these being the notion of cause and effect. Its learning begins in infancy (Phillips, 1986) and by two years toddlers are extending their understanding of it through rolling and kicking balls, discovering how balloons burst and the outcomes of many simple acts in a domestic setting.

Perspective Taking

While pre-schoolers are still egocentric in many respects, toddlers are much more so. Largely toddlers cannot grasp that their own perspective is not the only one. For example a preschooler can hide an object where another person in the same room cannot see it, but a toddler cannot necessarily eliminate all possibilities from another person's vantage point. However toddlers are showing some simple signs of emerging from egocentricism. They can find the object to which another person is pointing. They can also detect where someone's gaze is directed, but only if the face and eyes are aimed in the same direction. If the other person looks at something by turning their eyes but not their head, the toddler will be unable to guess what the other person is seeing (Stone & Church, 1984).

Another example of the gradual development of perspective taking during toddlerhood is seen in the fact that at eighteen months, when toddlers want to show someone a picture book, they share it by sitting next to that person, but by two years they will simply turn the book so that it faces the other person.

However they have not yet sufficiently learnt perspective taking and manipulative skills to be able to make their scribbling, which they love, representative of an object or person. It is as though they cannot yet turn their memory or perception of an object or person into the detail that will make it meaningful for others. Representatioinal drawing usually does not appear until about three years.

Concepts

The animate/inanimate distinction also shows marked changes during toddlerhood (Golinkoff and Harding, 1980 in Stone & Church, 1984). Whereas a sixteen month old shows no surprise when a chair appears to move spontaneously, a two year old is puzzled.

Toddlers know where all the household objects are kept, including those that are taboo. However their classificatory abilities are very limited. For example upon seeing a refrigerator, like the one in their own house in someone else's, they may believe it is the same one and ask how it was moved there.

Although they have learnt to poke objects into small openings, they perceive size relations imprecisely and may try to fit big things into little containers. By two they can recognise where

pieces go in a simple jig saw but have trouble orienting pieces so they slip into place and may resort to trying to thump them into position.

The toddler's concept of space has been defined as restricted to the toddler's awareness of how their motor activity or movement takes place within it (Werner, 1973). This is action space which is quite different from any understanding of maplike relationships and co-ordinates, which begin to appear in the late preschool and early school years. Toddlers know specific locations and routes linking these, for example from one room to another in their house or along familiar walks in the park. However they do not have an overall picture of the coherent whole. This is why, if they deviate around a bush from the habitual route in the park, they can become disoriented and panicky, especially if they lose sight of the adult accompanying them. For the same reason, on a routine walk, they may protest if a left turn is taken instead of the usual right turn.

Their small size means they see the world quite differently from adults. On walks they pause to examine things almost invisible to the adult : a small round pebble, a tiny beetle or feather.

The Significance of Pretending, Fantasising and Language.

By eighteen months a toddler's memory and understanding of the lasting nature of objects seems to have advanced sufficiently for him or her to want to search for a favourite toy lost from sight, as though they have a concept of the toy which they can hold in their minds and can imagine where it might be found - something which appears to be beyond younger infants (Phillips, 1986; Le Compte & Gatch, 1972). This suggests that by two years the child possesses symbolic thought. Such thought is incapable of the intricacies of abstract thought, such as deduction and induction or psychological manipulation which involves quite complex understanding and perspective taking of another. Instead a toddler's symbolic thought may be rather like a simple cartoon.

The presence of <u>pretend play</u> also suggests the child can hold and represent the immediate physical environment symbolically (Phillips, 1986). The toddler's pretend play is based on simple dramatic episodes and activities from daily domestic life. The doll is treated as Mum does the baby: trundled in a toy pram, petted, scolded, put to bed, nappies changed and noses wiped. Toddlers imitate their caretakers: answering the door, telephoning or pouring tea or coffee. By these means toddlers incorporate the behaviours of significant others into their development as a person.

Some of a toddler's <u>dramatic play</u> is simply mimicry, for example both boys and girls may copy the shaving of armpits or smoking a pipe. Much of it however is a way of learning about functioning in the family through simple fantasies, and is seen as essential for mental health in order to learn and in order to work through anxieties about vulnerability, separation, or anger. For example a toddler may spank a doll to relieve her anxiety about being spanked herself. The simple dramas of toddlerhood are also ways

of having good old fun which is equally important for mental health (Sutton-Smith, 1967).

Early fantasies in young children are often a blending of the emotions of the child in response to the social co-ercions of family life. They largely centre around bodily functions and controlling them, for example a doll may be sat upon the pot. The pretend play of toddlers is also inspired more by the real thing or objects very similar to the real thing, such as fair representations of telephones, brooms or cups. They make block towers of several blocks but seem content with the activity rather than pretending they are other structures as preschoolers do. It is not until the preschool years of 3 or more that symbolic thought has advanced sufficiently to be detached from the actual properties of specific objects, such that a stick can become a doll or a phone.

The presence of an imaginary companion is an oft repeated fantasy which also indicates the presence of symbolic thought, although most often imaginary companions do not appear until toward the end of toddlerhood, at two and a half years. Gone are the days when imaginary companions were regarded as an indication of insecurity, craziness or lying in children. They are now seen as part of normal development and a way of working for good mental health (Singer, 1973, Pines, 1978). Less adult chauvinism in observation has shown that children with an imaginary companion are often more engrossed in their play activities, happier and more co-operative (Singer, 1973). The imaginary companion can also be used as a scapegoat and can take the blame for the toddler's "naughty" behaviours. In fact toddlers appear to learn to control their behaviour through their imaginary companions: "Johnny hit the baby. That was naughty". Their presence is thus an early and rudimentary manifestation of conscience development, before it is internalised - a development that does not take place until later in the primary school years.

The use of language is another indicator of the symbolic thinking of a toddler. There is not room here to pursue the fascinating intricacies of toddlers' language development. This needs a paper on its own. However several points, as they pertain to the toddler's potential and harmonious living, are of specific interest.

The searching for competence in language can be a source of frustration and stress for both toddlers and parents, when a toddler's qualitative difference is not recognised. Nelson, quoted in Peterson (1984), points out that babies and toddlers have different approaches to language learning which may not always suit the caregiver's style. For example one baby was exceptionally fascinated by action and his first words described movements and events rather than names for objects or social situations. Most mothers follow the baby's lead but the mother of this baby persisted in offering him words, which were confined to the concrete objects which she pointed out in his picture books. She ignored his motion oriented words. His language development slowed down drastically and temper tantrums were frequent, which Nelson attributed to frustration engendered by

his world being at odds with his mother's reward system and expectations. Other children, whose prelinguistic mode is discarded through lack of approval, may struggle to take on the adult system, but the child may miss out on a sense of self initiation in language.

Toddler language is often a source of fun for adults and in their chauvinism the latter often fail to enjoy and respect the toddler's creativity. The way in which toddlers over extend words is a particular source of amusement. For example one country toddler, after repeatedly observing the moon and learning its name, described lemon slices, quartered oranges, a cow's horn and leaves as "moon". What is not always recognised, in such extensions, is that the toddler's initial definitions are conceptually different and more inclusive than the adult speaker's. In the child's own language the word "cat", for instance, may mean furry animal or the word "bird" may embrace any moving animal. In other cases toddlers use over-extension because they want to talk about things, whose names they have not yet learnt or have temporarily forgotten. In this case they may also use gestures or make up their own words and some of these are most impressive in their struggle to communicate. For example one toddler described an empty match box as "all gone blow".

Nor does a toddler"s usage of words always conform to the ways nouns, verbs or adjectives function in adult speech. More recent studies are concerned with the toddler's perspective and instead of trying to fit the toddler's early words into the categories of adult parts of speech, they have attempted to discover the kinds of word classification the child uses (Peterson, 1984).

Around two speech resembles adult telegrams and newspaper headlines. For example, "No bed" (I don't want to go to bed) or "Stone Daddy" (Daddy threw a stone). Grammatical "extras" like articles, prepositions, inflections and auxiliary verbs are usually left out. Nevertheless it is believed that toddler speech consists of far more than rote memory for set phrases and expressions. Instead toddlers apply their creativity to the task of devising rules which transcend all the specific phrases they have ever heard. These rules allow them to produce totally original, yet meaningful utterances (Peterson, 1984).

In summary the way the toddler thinks and the way he or she views the world and talks is qualitatively different from that of adults. Understanding these qualitative differences and adapting expectations to the pragmatics of toddler development often reduces stress all round in the family.

THE DEVELOPING AWARENESS OF SELF IN TODDLERS

The view that toddlers are miniature adults, not only intellectually but personally, is another attitude that leads to frustrating expectations and therefore stress for both toddlers and caregivers. Toddlers are still learning about self awareness which began in infancy. This awareness is based on their bodily and muscular movements or kinesthetic sense which leads to a growing sense of self as physically separate and active (Phillips, 1986).

Limited Objectivity

There are many indicators that toddlers have not quite finished the task of learning about themselves as a physically separate person and an object like other objects. For example they have no sense of themselves as obstacles and block doorways or passages and seem to be unable to comprehend why people cannot get by, much to the irritation of adults. Indeed toddlers have no awareness of themselves as obstacles to their own actions, which can be seen when they tug a length of rope on which they themselves are standing. They also seem to have no awareness of their own weight, as exhibited in the way they fling themselves about and allow themselves to be tossed high. Along with infants they seem to be unable to tell the exact location of some pain they are experiencing, and if thoroughly absorbed they may not notice being chilled or hot.

Thus Stone and Church (1984) suggest that, in toddlers, we may be witnessing a blurred definition between self and the world. This they believe is further exemplified in their aversion to broken things and they ask whether physical breakages make toddlers feel anxious about the integrity of their physical self or body. Certainly toddlers may react passionately to broken things. They may refuse to eat a broken biscuit or play with a broken doll, even after it has been repaired. Thus if one wishes to teach the lesson about not being "choosey", it will be more effective when the child is older.

Toddlers can also be disturbed by people, with an arm or leg missing, even glasses. A young reporter told of her nephew staring at her with what she described as distinct hostility and reserve everytime she visited. This was establishing a very poor relationship between them. Investigation revealed that she was the only member of the extended family and among family friends who wore glasses. The toddler was probably curious but also a little anxious and fearful at the strange appearance of his aunt's eyes. When he was allowed to try on the glasses and see how they made things bigger and even saw his aunt without them, he became more relaxed and relationships improved. This is a good example of how adult chauvinism can lead to misinterpretation of a toddler's behaviour.

Growing Self Image

By eighteen months, self awareness (and consequently awareness of others) is progressing considerably. Toddlers imitate many behaviours going on around them and take them into their own

repertoire. They may be observed "reading" a magazine, "sweeping" the floor and "chatting" on a toy telephone. Language may have advanced to several words and phrases - a development that greatly enhances social development. It also enables toddlers to define several things about themselves more precisely. Before they are two they can associate different parts of their bodies with words. When asked to touch their nose they will be able to do so and can follow instructions to open and close mouths and eyes. This helps in the development of their self-image. The question is when does and how does this begin? Responses to reflections in mirrors is often used as an indicator.

Babies are fascinated by mirrors and first notice their reflection at about eighteen weeks of age. But at this point they do not realise that the face is not that of someone else (Fein, 1978). Amsterdam's research suggests a developmental pattern of three distinct phases in children's response to their reflection (1972). At first, according to Amsterdam, the infant believes the reflection is that of another child, so that at about one year he or she may look behind the mirror in an effort to find that child.

During the second stage infants may be observed admiring and preening themselves in the mirror. Amsterdam believes that we cannot conclude from this that infants are admiring themselves. The infant may be imitating behaviour he or she has observed in adults looking in mirrors. The third phase in toddlerhood is the period in which true self recognition occurs, between 20 and 24 months and is indicated for example when the child looks in a mirror to locate or check a spot that has been put on his or her face. Despite such evidence the issue is controversial and research continues to try and determine precisely when self recognition occurs.

Sensuality

A two year old is a very sensual creature, deriving pleasure from messes, sounds,lights, tastes and smells. This sensuality extends into the anal genital area and the way the culture and caregivers react to exploration of bodily crevices can effect the child's self view (Craig, 1979).

Toddlers also sometimes have an almost compulsive concern with neatness and cleanliness. They love to squash cereal or mud through their fingers, but afterwards may be agitated until their fingers are wiped clean. Perhaps the foreign matter disrupts their sense of touch with playthings. Parents sometimes see this as a personality idiosyncracy rather than as part of normal development. (Phillips, 1986). Tell a toddler often enough that he is a compulsive obsessive and he'll become one.

Sex Stereotyping

In toddlerhood there is little yet in the way of sex stereotyping. Little girls and boys will both shave faces, legs and underarms, try to smoke or try on ear rings and necklaces.

They do not realise as yet that everything else about them may change, for example age and appearance, but sex will not. One toddler spoke of how she was now a little girl; "Then I shall grow into a Mummy. Then I shall grow into a Daddy". Questioning won respect, for her belief was based on thoughtful observation that on the whole children were very small, Mummies bigger and Daddies bigger still. This situation certainly applied in her family and thus she concluded her growth would be a progression through the three states of childhood, mummyhood and daddyhood.

Will and Competence

Toddlers are also learning about themselves as initiators. Signs of emerging self initiation, or will, in infants becomes apparent around 12 months when they may refuse to put on a jumper or have a bath. This self assertion increases in toddlers by 19 months to two years. Toddlers are driven by a need to become competent at a whole new range of skills and may reject attempts to help and insist on doing things for themselves. Frustrated they may throw a temper tantrum. Caretakers who are not threatened by these healthy manifestations allow toddlers to try in their own way and be as independent as reasonable. If there is danger or a need for rapid resolution, they use diversion, rapid removal, unobtrusive help or turn the toddler's frustration or defiance into a game. In this way safety routines and needs are attended to effectively. The child does not learn to regard his or her self assertion and attempts at independence and development of competence negatively and as occasioning anger in others. Simply because toddlers' do not reason like adults, it is futile trying to reason with a child of this age, although simple explanations can be given, as a preparation for later ages when they can.

Through their developing activities and skills, toddlers begin to develop a sense of competence in relation to objects and events. "I can". However they are powerless in many situations and imaginings of magical achievements can be ways of handling these frustrations and inadequacies, as for example in telling of an imaginary companion who brings the toddler lollies (Weiner & Elkind, 1972). As well as fantasies toddlers need space to develop some sense of self control and initiation and caretakers need to distinguish what matters from what does not matter (Craig, 1979). For example refusing to eat a dish previously ordered, or wear a particular pair of shoes, may not be an essential matter, but running out on the road is certainly a situation where the adult rule must hold firmly.

Adults are the mirrors in which young children learn about and see themselves. A toddler who hears little more than "You are a bad girl" or "That's naughty" or their name consistently shouted in a negative angry reprimand, is likely to incorporate this negativism into their self view.

"Me" and "Mine"

A child's name is very important in providing a sense of separate self: I"m John. She's Lauren". Also having caregivers has a similar effect" "My Mummy". "My Nanna". Thus self is extended

to include "me" and "mine". Similarly a few possessions aid the sense of individuality and separateness: "My toys", "My jumper". "My Bed". (Phillips 1986).

As Stone and Church (1984) point out, toddlers associate things with persons and fiercely object to the use of an object by someone with whom it is not associated. As a rule they are defensive about the property rights of others, before they begin to assert their own. The time comes though when the toddler enters a period of determined possessiveness. This often shocks caregivers who are concerned about sharing, especially in children. However toddlers' possessiveness probably means that their belongings are seen as an integral part of self and a way of defining boundaries between themselves and other children. Thus claiming toys is not simply negative or aggressive behaviour, but an important part of self definition and an attempt to make sense of the other child as a separate social being (Levine, 1983). Possessions are certainly part of adult self definition in a materialistic world, and much of a toddler's training consists of learning not to touch Mummy's crystal glass or Daddy's tools. This aspect of self definition in young children may not be typical of all cultures.

Negativism and Aggression

The toddler's frequent cry of "Me"! and "No'! are aspects of his or her battle for autonomy. Negativism seems to be a normal and essential part of the developoment of autonomy in the toddler and it can take forms other than verbal. The toddler may go rigid or limp or kick, bite, scratch, run away or throw a tantrum. Over reactions by adults seem to reinforce such behaviour, whereas ignoring reduces its frequency (Stone & Church 1984). Sometimes negativism is simply play acting or practicing how it feels to say no and, if the caregiver does not recognise it as such, a battle may unnecessarily develop. Proceeding confidently and calmly through the toddler's playful verbal resistance finds the toddler physically co-operating. As Stone and Church emphasise, if toddlers have ample opportunity to practice things on their own, balanced by the support they sometimes need and a few necessary restrictions, they emerge from this period with a sound sense of their own abilities and a readiness to tackle the tasks of later ages.

Constant battles may intimidate toddlers or encourage aggressive responses. Caretaker's attitudes and double messages can also encourage aggressiveness in children. In fact our culture has a very ambivalent attitude toward aggression. It forbids it, encourages it and is anxious about it (Phillips, 1982). For some toddlers it is the only way to get attention. Often children who receive little affection or attention and who are continually criticised and scolded tend to be hostile and aggressive in their relations with others (Fein, 1978). They feel bad, so they act out their 'badness" because they expect people to react negatively toward them.

Some caretakers punish aggression but fail to teach the toddler socially desirable alternative behaviour. The toddler knows what

he or she should not do but has very little idea of what kind of behaviour will win approval (Feschbach & Feschbach, 1972). Thus the defiance of a toddler is sometimes a confusion about what behaviours are expected. He or she may even lack any positive behaviour models or be a victim of double messages. For example some caretakers in their confusion about aggression see it as both a good thing and a bad thing in a toddler. The toddler picks up the hidden admiration when he socks the toddler next door. "He's not going to be a sissy" said one father proudly, at the same time spanking his toddler for hitting an older sibling with a cricket bat when he snatched his toy truck.

Caretakers tend to be more concerned with aggressive behaviour and take far less notice of altruistic behaviour. Yet altruistic behaviour is apparent in very young children and needs much more attention, both practically and theoretically, than it gets in our culture. As young as eighteen months toddlers will give toys to one another in play (Rheingold, Hay & West, 1976) and some children begin to show concern for others by the age of two. If a child falls down and cries, a toddler may spontaneously offer a toy.

In fact with the shifting emphasis in psychological research, from aggression to other forms of human interaction, and the possibility of observing more and more toddlers in day care situations, a change in beliefs about toddlers' social behaviour has come about. It is certainly now more recognised that co-operative and friendly behaviours exist as much as, if not more so, than negative behaviours in toddlerhood. Toddlers need positive encouragement for co-operation and kindness if caretakers wish their children to grow up able to give and take in interaction with others.

It also appears that punishment does not reduce aggression. In fact it stands to reason that since toddlers are such imitators they are sure to copy their parents' aggression (Feshbach & Feshbach, 1972). At the toddler stage, aggression appears to be most effectively dealt with by firm, swift removal and diversion, along with a consistent business-like instruction. Toddlers' moral behaviour is encouraged by their making motor reponses in the desired direction and receiving approval for simple pro-social behaviours such as giving a sweet to another child, helping to carry toys, or picking up rubbish. The repetition acts as a conditioning device and, at this stage, is necessary since the child understands largely at the motor level as indicated earlier. However, aggression is often misnamed in children. Much of it could more accurately be described as self-assertiveness, as the toddler tries to develop autonomy and become an independewnt and competent person.

Moreover the toddler's developing sense of competence can be disrupted by too many verbal rules and unrealistic expectations. Two or three single positively expressed rules, demonstrated and carried out in activity, are the limit of capacity at this stage. Toddlers can suffer depression in the form of head banging, gastric and eating disturbances, if overwhelmed by frustrations and expectations beyond their developmental capacity (Phillips,

1986). In fact much of a toddler's frustrated and aggressive behaviour can be due to over-expectations of his or her emotional, intellectual and physical capacities. Many new parents who expect their toddlers to be little adults, eat neatly at table, persist in tasks, not spill things and understand little of how toddlers' think or their limited awareness of the perspective of others, are immensely relieved when given basic information about toddlers. They relax visibly and relationships with their toddlers improve enormously. Said one parent, "You know I thought we'd got a bad one, but now I see its just the way all toddlers are". Another who had been complaining that his toddler was growing "into a little bitch - capricious, demanding and wilful, like a lot of women I know", also said his anxiety disappeared when he learnt that his toddler's behaviour was quite normal and related to the tasks of toddlerhood.

Security in Clear-Cut Guidelines

Alongside the need to allow autonomy to develop in toddlers, it is obviously necessary to protect them from injury and to protect the feelings and rights of others and also household valuables which cannot be kept out of reach. Actually toddlers appear to find comfort in clear cut guidelines. It is as though, knowing they are not yet fully capable of self control, they find security in those who help them with it. Tentative, hesitant commands inevitably invite a healthy autonomy seeking toddler to test limits or tease, which they love to do. Stone & Church comment that some parents seem to be afraid of losing their toddler's love if they are firm and so they beg good behaviour. This approach is inappropriate for toddler's who have not yet developed a moral conscience and do not understand the purpose of the co-ercions put upon them. A well loved toddler feels parental affection, even through occasional scoldings, whereas the rejected toddler will feel little satisfaction, even in occasional praise.

Toddlers are explorers and experimenters, but their insatiable curiosity exceeds their capacity for prudence and foresight. They fail to realise that they are dangerously in the way of a car backing out of a drive. They have no awareness of the dangers to them of deep water in swimming pools or the piercing qualities of sticks and scissors. Thus the environment needs to be safe, but also toddlers must be conditioned to avoid certain places and behaviours, through repeated firm commands and firm removal.

PLAY

Preschoolers delight in showing off their paintings, or play-dough models, but toddlers seem to enjoy attention more for the sake of companionship than demonstrating their final achievements. Older children or adults seem to have an urge to carry an activity through to completion but a toddler seems indifferent to unfinished business which adults, in an entirely different mode of thinking, can find very frustrating. Toddlers are likely to abandon projects midway as their attention shifts

or new impulses arise. They may drop a puzzle they have been insisting on putting together or the teddy they were about to bath.

They love gross motor activity: swinging, bouncing, hammering and chasing balls, but they also enjoy quiet activities such as drawing, although supervision is needed as it is likely to flow onto walls and furnishings. They like to listen to music and love looking at picture books and exploring new objects. Stone and Church (1984) question how much sense they make of television and describe a two year old who would sit and stare at the blank set as though there was something in the activity itself that he felt to be significant. Certainly toddlers find some of television's changing sights and sounds fascinationg and memorise commercial jingles from an early age. However because a toddler's self concept is so much wrapped in the physical self, it is believed they find television violence, even the slapstick rough housing that older children enjoy, very disturbing. Thus a toddler's television watching needs to be well chosen.

Toddlers enjoy emptying drawers, boxes and cupboards simply for the pleasure of the emptying process and a household in which there is a toddler can become a jumble. Toddlers are willing to help tidy up their messes but are liable to lose sight of the goal and begin taking things out as fast as they are put away. (Stone & Church, 1984). An adult, who does not understand this and expects the toddler to be as organised as an adult, inevitably suffers stress.

SOCIAL RELATIONS

The infant learns simple awarenesses of self as a social being through reciprocal smiling and playing simple baby games with an adult. Many of the social games of infancy such as peek a boo, hiding and rough and tumble play continue largely unchanged in the toddler. Toddlers however are more aware of self and love social games which test and confirm that they exist. For example they delight in an adult pretending they do not see them curled in a chair and "sitting" on them and going through a ritual of "Good heavens what is this? Is it a balloon? Is it a cushion? No its Peggy", and such simulated puzzlement and astonishment is accompanied by squeals of pleasure from the toddler.

Toddlers love to snuggle up to an adult to hear a simple story read from a book with lots of pictures. They love the story to be read slowly with much feeling and play acting. They like an opportunity to mouth the bits they know.

Lap sitting is something most toddlers enjoy and hold their arms aloft as a signal to be lifted rather than climbing into an adult's lap. Some of this is for cuddling, or reading but some is for the fun of being jiggled and bounced, even thrown back and forth.

Rudimentary friendships may be formed between toddlers who come to know each other well and they enjoy visiting and playing side

by side or in parallel play with little obvious social interchange, apart from occasional snatching and wrestling over playthings. Although adults are busy noticing the latter, they often miss frequent positive reactions, such as smiling, making communicative noises and sharing. Mueller and Musatti, (1981 in Stone & Church, 1984) believe there are indications that toddlers share a concept of what is going on. They cite as evidence conscious playfulness, planfulness, ritualisation and the use of vocal signals, as in imitation of sounds. As indicated earlier, nowadays we have more opportunity to see toddlers in social situations, such as day care situations, and this has caused some revision of theories about toddlers and recognition of their positive capabilities in social interaction. Most contemporary studies report a low incidence of conflict in day care centres.

Toddlers also seem to be able to adjust to the play capabilities of younger children. For example eighteen month olds will initiate ball rolling with a twelve month old and remove a block from a baby's mouth. A two year old will perform silly movements and utter nonsense vocalisations with an eighteen month old (Stone & Church, 1984). Ross found that adults could do little to influence social interactions between toddlers (1982).

Certainly there is social awareness in toddlers such that toddlers may try to resolve a conflict by distracting another child's attention from a contested object (Ross & Hay, 1977 in Stone & Church, 1984)). For example the toddler may start playing with a siblings prized toy, such as a tricycle, knowing the sibling will abandon the contested object to repossess the tricycle. Sometimes toddler are especially aware of what will comfort another child. For example if a young child continues to cry they may run and fetch, of their own initiative, the special object that stops the child crying, such as a security blanket.

In summary casting out outworn stereotypes about social behaviour in toddlers, and noticing its positive aspects, can be constructive of harmony in both caregivers and toddlers.

SIBLING RIVALRY

The idea that a spirit of competition, jealousy and hostility necessarily exists among children of the same family is called sibling rivalry (Stone & Church, 1984). It may be peculiar to small nuclear families and is not so obvious in some extended and communal families in non western cultures. To reduce the shock of suddenly having another person around to share the caregiver's attention, Stone and Church believe toddlers of two and a half can be told in advance of the arrival of a new baby, but not so far in advance that they forget about it or it becomes unreal with the slow passage of time. They can share in the preparations and learn to feel that the baby is as much theirs as the parents. However even if the parents are very careful that the toddler's need for affection and attention is met and that friends and relations devote as much time to the toddler as the new baby, all this may not prevent the toddler from being somewhat jealous. Nor is it certain that all jealousy ought to

be avoided if we want children to know the full range of emotions (Stone & Church, 1984).

The topic of sibling rivalry is a large one and there are other papers on it in this series. Suffice it to summarise here the major manifestations in a toddler. Insecurity may reveal itself in regression to more infantile ways of behaving, such as whining, clinging, crying, more babyish speech or loss of control over the bladder. Sometimes a toddler may attack the new baby. While the toddler's dangerous acts must be restrained, obviously any suggestion that he or she is wicked or depraved as a person can only confirm the toddler's impression that the love the parent's previously held for him or her has been displaced onto the newcomer. It is not possible to be perfect in these situations, and it is only when toddlers are consistently ignored that they learn that love is something to be stolen or fought for, rather than something that is stable and can be counted upon.

One mother described how she won over her resentful toddler by making comments that indicated that she was still on his side : "The baby can't talk but I've go you to talk to". "Funny baby. She makes funny noises". The toddler grinned for the first time since she came home from hospital and three days later was hugging the baby.

Moreover, providing it is not overwhelming, some sibling rivalry helps children to learn about submission and dominance in relation to others. Often toddlers with older siblings have learnt effective strategies to cope with these situations, and develop a sense of self esteem and competence in standing up for themselves. Many parents and professionals are convinced that some fighting between siblings is healthy and helps get rid of pent up emotions. One mother observed how her toddler threw the most tantrums when the older siblings were not around, as though she was releasing energy that was otherwise spent in asserting herself. Moreover children have not learnt the "niceties" of adult rivalries which are part of everyday life. Also we are chasing romantic or soap opera fantasies when we expect brothers and sisters to live in perpetual, loving harmony. When such fantasies intrude into everyday expectations, they create as much unnecessary stress as hostile myths.

TOILET TRAINING

Battles about toilet training and the "neurotic anal types" of decades ago are now largely out of fashion (Phillips, 1982). It appears that where toddlers have total freedom to observe their parents using the toilet they toilet train themselves. Readiness shows three developmental stages of awareness. In the first stage the toddler becomes aware that elimination has just taken place, in the second stage that elimination is in progress and in the third that it is about to take place. It is at this point of awareness that the toddler is ready to take control. Approval which helps to give the child a sense of his or her own initiative and competence is a powerful reinforcer. Material

rewards such as sweeties, have been found to be less effective over time because extrinsic rewards depress the motivation to learn (Lepper & Green, 1978). The toddler likes dominion over his or her own body and, once sphincter control is developed, will progress enormously, unless toilet training has been made a battle ground.

Bowel training usually comes first and waking bladder control comes before sleeping bladder control. The latter is often lost in times of illness, excitement or stress. Stone and Church do not recommend trying to schedule the toddler's bowel movements by giving laxatives or enemas. The latter, which involves the experience of rapidly losing part of oneself, can be quite frightening for a toddler. A potty chair that the toddler can get in and out of autonomously, allowing the right and responsibility to lower his or her own pants, leading gently to the pot in cases of warning signs, but not expecting him or her to sit for more than a few minutes, when nothing happens, and lots of praise for independence and achievement are described as the most effective procedures. Stone and Church also warn that rushing to empty the pot down the toilet with upturned nose can convey that what the toddler has produced is a revolting part of self.

At first both boys and girls urinate sitting down. Both boys and girls may also wish to imitate their fathers and urinate standing up, with consequent messes.

PARENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

Stone and Church observe that a negative stereotyped view of toddlers can affect parents, mental health. Moreover some toddlers are easier than others. Throughout this paper the emphasis has been on understandings that reduce conflict between oneself and the toddler. The realisation that one's toddler is like all others can be an enormous boost to morale. Without that one can become prey to the common fiction that childhood can be ideal and totally happy. In its thrall, we pursue a false dream of having children that are always co-operative and happy. If they were, they'd never develop or learn to cope with frustration, anger and other people.

Just as children cannot be ideal, neither can parents. Anger is normal, and it is far better to let it out before it bursts into uncontrollable rage. As said earlier, well loved toddlers survive their parent's anger and may need it at time to set limits for them. Parents need anger to express feelings, as much as love and affection.

One certainly has rights as a parent as much as the child has. Parents need time to relax - times that toddlers can recognise as theirs. For example several mothers said that, after their partner comes home from work and has played with the children, they find it relaxing to communicate with another adult, so they set a time for the two of them to have a drink and a chat, while the toddler has a bath or draws or colours in at his or her play

table, instead of waiting until after bed time. Many single parents also set such times aside for themselves. To forget oneself in one's children, to become a martyr or a super mum or dad, is not the path to good mental health in a parent or a toddler.

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